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C O N F I D E N T I A L LIBREVILLE 000580

DEPT ALSO FOR AF/E: NOLE GAREY; AF/RSA:
MIKE BITTRICK; AND IO/PSC: TANAZ KHAMBATTA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/15/2018

TAGS: PREL PGOV KPKO SO GB

SUBJECT: GABON SEEKS ALIGNMENT WITH AU ON POSSIBLE UNPKO TO
SOMALIA

REF: STATE 129524

Classified By: Poloff Leslie Doumbia for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

(C) Gabon, like the US, is concerned about a precipitous Ethiopian withdrawal from Somalia, according to Michel Biang, Director of Legal Affairs at the Foreign Ministry. Biang, however, told DCM December 12 that Gabon would have to consult closely with former Gabonese Foreign Minister and current Chairman of the African Union (AU) Jean Ping before reaching a final position on the proposed United Nations Peacekeeping Operation (UNPKO) in Somalia. He promised to immediately relay US points regarding the proposed UNPKO to both Minister of Foreign Affairs Paul Toungui and to Ping's personal secretary at the AU, with whom he continues to have close contact. Since Ping's ascendancy to the chairmanship, Biang claimed that Gabon has made special efforts to be more aligned with the AU's policy stances.

REDDICK